

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L QUEBEC 0263

EO 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT, FR, CA
SUBJ: AWAKENING OF LES FRERES JACQUES

REF: QUEBEC 0251

1. FRANCO-QUEBEC RELATIONS ARE AGAIN BECOMING INTIMATE AFTER A RELATIVELY COOL PERIOD DURING THE SECOND BOURASSA TERM IN QUEBEC (1973-76) AND EARLY GISCARD PERIOD IN FRANCE. GOQ WAS UNUSUALLY WELL REPRESENTED AT TODAY'S BASTILLE DAY RECEPTION WITH 15 OF 24 CABINET MEMBERS PRESENT, INCLUDING RENE LEVESQUE HIMSELF. FRENCH CG MADE HEAVILY NUANCED SPEECH REFERRING TO SPECIAL HISTORIC CONNECTIONS BETWEEN "TWO NATIONS" AND TO QUEBEC'S "NEW NATIONAL DAY" ON JUNE 24. BOTH FRENCH AND QUEBECOIS OFFICIALS SEEMED ANXIOUS TO DISPLAY SPECIAL EMPATHY WHICH EXISTS BETWEEN THE NEW GOVERNMENT AND FRENCH OFFICIALS HERE.

2. IN SPEECH AT RECEPTION, FRENCH CG BEAUX MENTIONED LEVESQUE'S VISIT

TO FRANCE ANTICIPATED FOR OCTOBER (REFTEL). BEAUX ALSO REFERRED TO FREQUENT FRENCH MINISTERIAL VISITS EXPECTED DURING NEXT
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SEVERAL MONTHS. SOURCE IN FRENCH CONSULATE GENERAL CONFIRMED TO US THAT ALAIN PEYREFITTE WILL BE IN QUEBEC IN SEPTEMBER AND MINISTER

OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY RENE MONORY IS DUE TO ARRIVE IN OCTOBER AT HEAD OF DELEGATION OF 100 FRENCH BUSINESSMEN.

3. WHEN ASKED ABOUT RECENT REPORTS IN CANADIAN PRESS (REFTEL)

ALLEGING SPECIAL SYMPATHY AMONG "TOP LEVEL" QUAI D'ORSAY OFFICIALS FOR QUEBEC INDEPENDENCE, FRENCH SOURCE DENIED EXISTENCE OF SUCH SENTIMENT AND COMMENTED THAT PRESS REPORT HAD BEEN EMBARRASSING FOR FRENCH OFFICIALS IN QUEBEC.

4. COMMENT: QUEBEC HAS ENJOYED A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH FRANCE SINCE THE EARLY 1960'S WHICH PEAKED DURING DE GAULLE'S VISIT IN 1968. AS A RESULT, THE LARGE FRENCH CG IN QUEBEC, WITH ITS SATELLITE IN MONTREAL, IS VIRTUALLY AUTONOMOUS FROM EMBASSY IN OTTAWA. FOR SOME YEARS, ULTR-NATIONALISTS IN PQ ENJOYED CLOSE RELATIONS WITH SOME FRENCH GAULLISTS. WE ARE NOW HEARING THAT GOQ HAS BEGUN TO CULTIVATE CONTACTS WITHIN FRENCH SOCIALIST PARTY, ANTICIPATING POSSIBILITY THAT SOCIALISTS MAY BE DOMINANT PARTNERS IN COALITION OF LEFT AFTER NEXT FRENCH ELECTION. GROWING INTIMACY BETWEEN PQ AND FRENCH OFFICIALS

BOTH HERE AND IN FRANCE NO DOUBT IS REFLECTION OF GISCARD'S POLITICAL NEED TO AVOID BEING OUTFLANKED BY GAULLISTS ON EVEN RELATIVELY MINOR ISSUE COUPLED WITH PQ WISH TO GAIN PRESITIGIOUS INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR ITS SOVEREIGNTIST AMBITIONS.

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